

## **Katsina, Nigeria (2024)**

We pray for the Diocesan President and all Mothers' Union members in Katsina.

Located in Western Africa, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and the seventh most populated country in the world. According to 2023 figures the population is just under 196 million and the average age 18.4 years. The population is estimated to virtually double to 400 million by 2050. Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups and over 500 additional indigenous languages. It is one of Sub Saharan Africa's largest economies and relies heavily on oil as its main source of revenue, yet despite this it is estimate that more than 60% of Nigeria's population lives in extreme poverty.

Mothers' Union has been present in Nigeria for well over 100 years, having started there in 1908. Conservative estimates of membership numbers start at 60,000 but in reality our numbers could be far greater than this. Mothers' Union in Nigeria is very active in creating opportunities for women and young girls to reach their full potential, working closely alongside the Women's Guild in each diocese.

Mothers' Union outreach activities include hospital visits, health clinics, support for widows and orphans, day care centres and nursery schools, marriage preparation, vocational training, orphan care, prison ministry and a parenting Programme.

Katsina is in the north of Nigeria, near the border with Niger. It has a hot semi-arid climate. The city walls surrounding it are about 13 miles in length, sadly, most of it now in ruins. Katsina is a very old city, believed to have been founded around 1100AD. In 1903, the Emir accepted British rule, which continued until Nigerian independence from Britain in 1960. Katsina's Fulani emirs retain traditional and advisory roles and reside in the palace of the Kangiwa ("Elephant's Head").

Modern Katsina is a major collecting point for peanuts (groundnuts) and for hides and skins that are sent to Kano, 92 miles southeast, for export by road and rail. In Katsina's central market, sorghum, millet, onions and other vegetables, peanuts, indigo, goats, poultry, sheep, cattle, and cotton are traded. Traditional crafts of the town's predominantly Hausa population include weaving and dyeing of cotton, working in leather and metal, and the design of pottery, embroidery, and calabashes. Modern

industries were introduced in the 1970s and include vegetable oil mills and a steel-rolling plant.

Nigeria is a mainly Muslim country and the relationship between Christian and Muslims in mainly Muslim areas is very important. There is also a divide between the urban areas and remote rural areas. Mothers' Union members ensure that the benefits and support they provide reach right out to the most remote areas.

Nigeria and Katsina state suffer from a huge level of crime. There is a jihadist insurgency in the north, deadly clashes between animal herders and farmers, a separatist insurgency in the south-east as well as militants in the Niger Delta demanding a greater share of oil profits.

There were elections in February with results being announced in May. These results were fiercely contested by the opposition parties. President Bola Tinubu, who took office in May, has yet to detail how he will tackle the security problems.

We pray for the members in Katsina and the work they carry out in very challenging and difficult circumstances. We pray for their safety and for the safety of all Christians there.

**Amen**

*Gill MU / Katsina 2024*